

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OES-06 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05 FEAE-00 DODE-00

AID-05 CEA-01 COME-00 FPC-01 H-01 INT-05 OMB-01

PM-04 USIA-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 PRS-01

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R 131743Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1697

INFO ERDA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, PFOR, FR, US

SUBJECT: FRENCH REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S NUCLEAR
POLICY STATEMENT

1. SUMMARY. FRENCH REACTION TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S
NUCLEAR POLICY STATEMENT HAS BEEN A MIXTURE OF SUPPORT
FOR THE NONPROLIFERATION OBJECTIVE AND CONCERN FOR THE
FUTURE EFFECT ON THE FRENCH NUCLEAR INDUSTRY. FRIDAY,
APRIL 8, NEWSPAPERS CARRIED THE SUBSTANCE OF THE POLICY
STATEMENT AND OBSERVATIONS ON WHAT IT WOULD MEAN TO THE
FUTURE CHANCES FOR THE FRENCH BREEDER PROGRAM. AN
OFFICIAL COMMENT CARRIED BY AFP WIRE SERVICE EARLY
FRIDAY AFTERNOON WELCOMED THE PRESIDENT'S UNDERSTANDING
OF THE PROBLEMS OTHER NATIONS FACED AND NOTED THAT HE
HAD TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT MANY OF THE OBSERVATIONS MADE BY
FRANCE AND OTHERS DURING CONSULTATIONS PRIOR TO THE
APRIL 7 RELEASE. THE PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF SOME
OBSERVERS OF THE FRENCH SCENE IS THAT IN THE NEAR TERM

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FRENCH REPROCESSING INDUSTRY WILL NOT BE HURT BUT THAT
THE LONG TERM FUTURE FOR THE FRENCH BREEDER IS BLEAK.
END SUMMARY.

2. THE DAILY MORNING NEWSPAPER, LE FIGARO, HERALDED THE
STATEMENT AS THE MAKINGS OF A NEW CONCORDE AFFAIR.
WHILE POSSIBLY NOT HURTING THE US, RICH IN NATURAL ENERGY

RESOURCES, THE NEW US POLICY WILL SERIOUSLY HAMPER FRENCH NUCLEAR PROJECTS BECAUSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE DECISION AND THE PROBABLE US EFFORTS TO GET OTHERS TO FOLLOW ITS LEAD. IT WOULD MEAN THE END OF FRENCH LEADERSHIP IN ADVANCED NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY. THE PROBLEM OF WASTE MANAGEMENT IS LEFT ROTTING WHICH WILL LEAD TO ECONOMIC PROBLEMS ON A GLOBAL BASIS IN THE FUTURE.

3. IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON OF FRIDAY, APRIL 8, AN AFP WIRE SERVICE STORY QUOTED A FRENCH OFFICIAL OF THE QUAI D'ORSAY AS STATING THAT FRANCE WELCOMED PRESIDENT CARTER'S NUCLEAR STATEMENT, THAT THE PRESIDENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE ENERGY PROBLEMS OF OTHER NATIONS WAS APPRECIATED AND NOTE WAS MADE THAT HE HAD TAKEN VERY MUCH INTO ACCOUNT THE OBSERVATIONS MADE BY FRANCE AND OTHER NATIONS DURING RECENT CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT AT THE INITIATIVE OF THE US. THE OFFICIAL COMMENT WAS MADE TO DISASSOCIATE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT FROM THE MORNING NEWSPAPER ATTACK ON THE POLICY STATEMENT CALLING THE US MOVE A NEW CONCORDE AFFAIR. QUAI SOURCES INDICATED THAT THEIR COMMENTS WERE TO BE CONSIDERED PRELIMINARY AS THEY HAD NOT HAD TIME TO MAKE A DETAILED STUDY OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT AND ACCOMPANYING REMARKS AND THAT ANY FURTHER COMMENTS WOULD COME ONLY AFTER CAREFUL STUDY.

4. WIRE SERVICE COMMENTS ON THE QUAI VIEWS NOTED THAT FRANCE WAS STRESSING THE POINTS OF CONVERGENCE OF US AND FRENCH POLICIES IN THIS FIELD. FRANCE HAS STATED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT DOES NOT WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR ARMS. HOWEVER, FRANCE DOES NOT SEE EYE TO EYE WITH THE US ON REPROCESSING AND BREEDER REACTORS. FRANCE IS MORE ADVANCED THAN THE US IN THESE FIELDS AND IT WOULD APPEAR AS THOUGH THE US WAS TRYING TO KEEP OTHERS (FRANCE) FROM TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS LEADERSHIP. THE COMMENT WENT ON TO NOTE THAT THIS US POLICY WOULD PUT US NUCLEAR INDUSTRY AT A DISADVANTAGE RELATIVE TO EUROPEAN COUNTERPARTS AS CUSTOMERS WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GUARANTEE OF FUEL SUPPLY AND THE AVAILABILITY OF FULL CYCLE SERVICES.

5. THE FRIDAY AFTERNOON EDITION OF LE MONDE (DATED APRIL 8) BELIEVED THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION WAS TOO LATE, THAT PLUTONIUM IS NOW MADE IN MANY REACTORS AROUND THE WORLD AND THAT REPROCESSING IS WITHIN THE REACH OF MANY COUNTRIES. COUNTRIES WITHOUT ADEQUATE COAL AND URANIUM RESOURCES, SOME VERY GOOD FRIENDS OF THE US, WILL OPPOSE THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION

AS BEING AN APPROACH THAT IS EXPENSIVE ON THE ECONOMIC

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LEVEL AND DANGEROUS ON THE LONG TERM ENVIRONMENTAL
LEVEL. REPROCESSING IS AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER
AND STOPPING THAT TECHNOLOGY IS NOT POSSIBLE. PERHAPS,
THE ARTICLE OFFERED, REPROCESSING UNDER INTERNATIONAL
CONTROL MAY BE A FEASIBLE SOLUTION. THE DECISION IS
ONE MADE BY AN ENERGY RESOURCE RICH COUNTRY.

6. IN HIS TELEVISED PRESS MEETING OF TUESDAY EVENING,
APRIL 12, PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING BRIEFLY MENTIONED
THE AMERICAN NUCLEAR POLICY STATEMENT, STATED THAT
FRANCE'S POLICY IS TO NOT SUPPORT THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR
ARMS AND TO DECIDE FOR ITSELF HOW NUCLEAR POWER WILL BE
EMPLOYED TO MEET THE ENERGY NEEDS OF FRANCE. THERE
WERE NO QUESTIONS ON THIS SUBJECT DURING THE
PRESS MEETING.

7. COMMENT. THE FRIDAY MORNING FIGARO ARTICLE
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APPEARED TO BE BASED ON THE PRINTED STATEMENT RELEASED AT THE TIME OF THE PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT AND CARRIED IN PAGE 3 OF THE FRIDAY, APRIL 8, USIS WIRELESS FILE. THE QUAI COMMENTS EARLY FRIDAY AFTERNOON WERE BASED ON A REVIEW OF THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE PRESIDENT'S PRESENTATION OF HIS POLICY AND OF THE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS IMMEDIATELY THERE FOLLOWING. THE SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN THE TRANSCRIPT TO "REMOVING THE PRESSURE FOR THE REPROCESSING OF NUCLEAR FUELS BY OTHER COUNTRIES THAT DO NOT NOW HAVE THIS CAPABILITY" (FIFTH POINT) AND IN THE PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH TO "NOT TRYING TO IMPOSE OUR WILL ON THOSE NATIONS.... FRANCE... WHICH ALREADY HAVE OR WILL SOON HAVE REPROCESSING PLANTS IN OPERATION" WAS A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE EFFORT BY THE QUAI TO PUT A BRIGHTER LIGHT ON FRENCH PUBLIC REACTION. CERTAINLY, THE POSTPONEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT OF BREEDER REACTORS WILL HURT FRENCH EFFORTS TO BRING THEIR BREEDER TO COMMERCIAL USE AS IT WILL COST MORE MONEY AND TIME TO REACH PUBLICALLY ACCEPTED SAFETY STANDARDS; THE FOREIGN SALES PICTURE IS ZERO. FRENCH REPROCESSING MAY GET A BOOST IF US MATERIAL USED BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES IS PERMITTED TO BE REPROCESSED (AND SUCH ACTION WILL BE STRONGLY ARGUED ON ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS). FRANCE HAS A GOOD CORNER ON THE REPROCESSING MARKET NOW AND PRICES MAY BE ALTERED UPWARD TO REFLECT THAT POSITION. GAMMON

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